

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10, 13-41, and 44-49 are pending in this application. Previously withdrawn claims 11, 12, 42, and 43 are canceled by the present response without prejudice.

Claims 1-10, 13-41, and 44-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Addressing the above-noted rejection, that rejection is traversed by the present response.

The basis for the rejection indicates that the claims omit an essential element, citing M.P.E.P. §2172.01, and specifically stating, “[f]or at least independent claims 1, 13, 21, 29, 37, and 44, the omitted element that is the element should indicate where a preselected reference number comes from or being generated by that element before it is compared with the input information”.

The above-noted basis for the outstanding rejection is believed to be improper as the claims are not believed to omit any essential element.

Attention is directed to M.P.E.P. §2172.01 cited in the Office Action. That portion of the MPEP indicates that a claim cannot omit matter disclosed to be essential to the invention *as described in the specification or in other statements of record*. Applicants respectfully submit neither the specification nor the record describe or suggest that indicating where the preselected reference number comes from is essential. One feature in the present invention is comparing input information with a preselected reference number, which is clearly reflected in the claims. Where the preselected reference number comes from is not a critical feature of the invention, and has not been disclosed as a critical feature in the invention either in the specification or the prosecution history. The claims recite all essential elements.

Moreover, attention is directed to the specification at page 7, line 16 *et seq.* disclosing a non-limiting example of factors to consider in making the preselected reference number. As discussed in that portion of the specification different printing operations have different costs, and therefore for a given number of printings, for example 10 or more printings, a stencil printer 6 may result in lower printing cost than a laser printer 4 or digital copier 5.

From such portions in the specification it is clear that at least in one non-limiting example, the preselected reference number is based on the characteristics of individual systems directed to their printing costs for different printing operations. Where the preselected reference number comes from is not critical. The basis for the outstanding rejection also has not indicated where in the specification or prosecution history it has been indicated that indicating where the preselected reference number is critical.

In view of these foregoing comments, applicants respectfully submit each of claims 1-10, 13-41, and 44-51 is in full compliance with all requirements under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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